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12 a third supply source of a hot sterile drying air for
13 activating and drying the sterilant in the interior of the
14 container.

1 2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, further including a
2 heater for adding additional heat to the atomized sterilant.

1 3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the container is
2 a bottle.

1 4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the sterilant is
2 hydrogen peroxide.

1 5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the supply
2 source of sterilant includes a spoon dipper apparatus.

1 6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the atomizing
2 system further includes an atomizing venturi.

1 7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second
2 supply source of hot sterile air further includes a humidity
3 control system for maintaining the humidity of the hot sterile
4 air.

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1 8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the probe for
2 applying the sterilant is a spray nozzle.

1 9. (Canceled) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the probe for
2 applying the sterilant extends into the container.

1 10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein after drying the
2 container interior surface retains a concentration of hydrogen
3 peroxide less than .5 PPM.

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1 11. (Amended) A method comprising:
2 providing a first supply of sterile air;
3 providing a supply of sterilant;
4 producing an atomized sterilant by mixing the first
5 supply of sterile air with the sterilant;
6 providing a second supply of hot sterile air to the
7 atomized sterilant;
8 providing a probe extending into an interior of a
9 container for applying the atomized sterilant into the interior
10 of the container; and
11 supplying a third supply of hot sterile drying air for
12 activating and drying the sterilant in the interior of the
13 container.

1 12. (Original) The method of claim 11, further including the step
2 of providing a heater for adding additional heat to the atomized
3 sterilant.

1 13. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the container is a
2 bottle.

1 14. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the sterilant is
2 hydrogen peroxide.

1 15. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of
2 supplying a supply of sterilant further includes the step of
3 providing a spoon dipper apparatus for measuring the quantity of
4 the sterilant.

1 16. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of
2 producing an atomized sterilant further includes providing an
3 atomizing venturi for mixing the first supply of sterile air with
4 the sterilant.

1 17. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of
2 providing a second source of hot sterile air further includes
3 providing a humidity control system for maintaining the humidity
4 of the hot sterile air.

1 18. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of
2 supplying a probe further includes providing a spray nozzle for
3 applying the sterilant.

1 19. (Canceled) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of
2 supplying a probe further includes extending the probe into the
3 container.

1 20. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of
2 supplying a third supply of hot sterile drying air further
3 includes the interior of the container retaining a concentration
4 of hydrogen peroxide less than .5 PPM.

1 21. (Amended) Apparatus comprising:
2 means for supplying a first source of sterile air;
3 means for supplying a source of sterilant;
4 means for providing an atomizing system for producing
5 an atomized sterilant from the mixing of sterile air from the
6 first source of sterile air with the sterilant;
7 means for supplying a second source of hot sterile air
8 to the atomized sterilant;
9 means for applying the atomized sterilant to an
10 interior of a container by extending a probe into the interior of
11 the container; and

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means for supplying a third source of hot sterile drying air into the interior of the container for activating and drying the sterilant.

1 22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the means for
2 supplying a third source of hot sterile drying air further
3 includes a means for providing a residual concentration of
4 hydrogen peroxide less than .5 PPM.

REMARKS

Claims 1-8, 10-18, and 20-22 remain pending. Claims 1, 11, and 21 have been amended. Claims 9 and 19 have been canceled.

Claims 1-2, 4-12, and 14-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kelbrick et al. The Examiner states that "Kelbrick et al inherently discloses the same method and apparatus where objects are being sterilized on a conveyor belt with gasous hydrogen peroxide and then heated to temperatures where the gas evaporates leaving a concentration of 0.5 ppm of hydrogen peroxide..." Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection as follows. Kelbrick et al. fails to teach or suggest, *inter alia*, "... a probe extending into an interior of a container for applying the atomized sterilant into the interior of the container," as recited in claim 1.

Furthermore, Kelbrick et al. fails to teach or suggest, *inter*